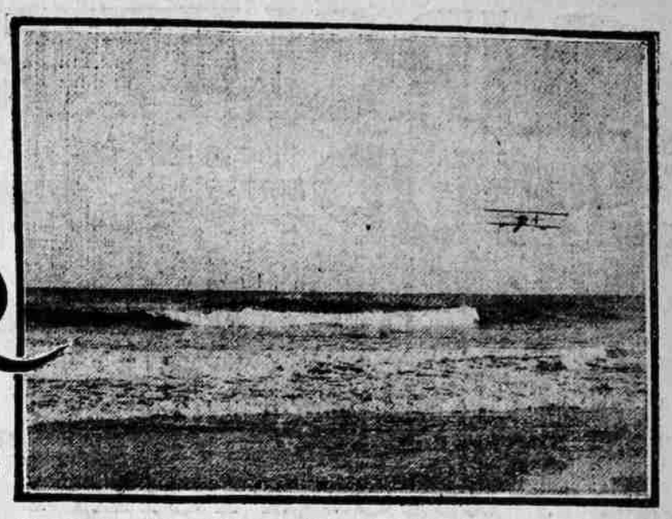
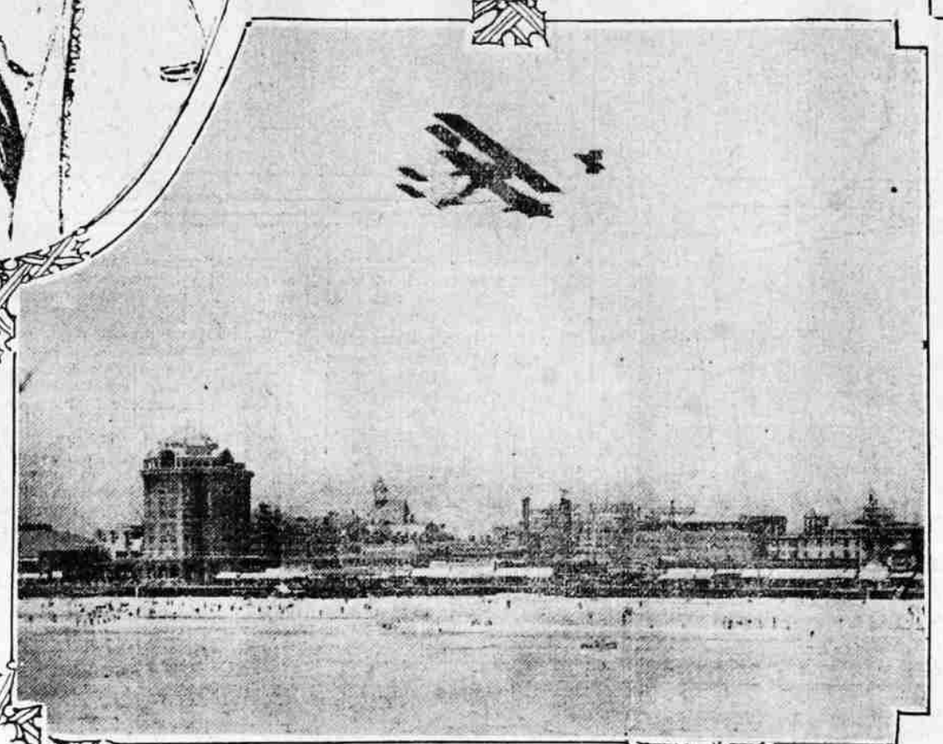
FROM "NUT" TO INCOME TAX PAYER

Patent Office Decision Declaring A. S. Janin the Real Inventor of the Hydro-Aeroplane, Changes Him From a Cabinet Maker Into a Man With "Gobs" of Coin





When the income tax collector comes around next time there will be a new name on the income tax rolls. The name is Albert S. Janin, inventor of the hydroaeroplane. Perhaps you thought Glenn H. Curtiss was the inventor of the hydroaeroplane, but the men down in the patent office say you are wrong. A few weeks ago they handed down a decision at the patent office of Washington saying the first model for a hydroaeroplane was made by Janin, and if any other makers of the machines wanted to construct them they would have to pay a royalty on each machine to Janin.

These royalties will not begin from some future date after higher courts have deliberated long over the case, but all persons who have built flying machines using Janin's method will have to pay royalties on all machines they ever have made.

That means a big sum of money was due Janin the day the decision was handed down, and the chief job Janin now has on his hands is that of a collector.

When the news was brought to Janin he was making a kitchen cabinet in a factory. He has been making cabinets for fourteen years, working eight hours a day in Rosebank, Staten Island. When his work was over he went home to his private shop where he worked on a machine for flying over the water and which could light on the waves like a duck.

When the Wrights were still working with their gliding machines, Janin was working on his type of flyer. Having spent his childhood on the seashore, Janin did not care so much about flying on land. He wanted to sail over the water. He wanted to look down on the ships and gulls and that is one reason he specialized on the water flying machine. There was still another reason. Janin had no long, sandy beach to fly over as the Wrights had. He had to hustle for his wife and family and when a man is making only $5 a day he hasn't time to go on a long vacation. The Wright brothers were bachelors and had nothing to hold them back.

As Janin expressed it, he is a married man with seven children and had something to spur him on. Without a long sandy beach to fly over Janin began to experiment on flying over the sea. The sea was near enough to his house to be ready of access at all times for trial flights, and so Janin just tried and tried.

"He's a nut," his neighbors said.

He cared nothing for the ordinary social activities of Rosebank. When his work was over for the man who paid him $5 a day he went to work for Janin, and the result was he developed a machine which ultimately was good enough to patent. Thinking that his discoveries were secure under the patent laws, Janin took no precautions to guard the secret of his invention. The machine was built much like Wright's aeroplane. It was not a copy of the Wright machine, but grew up with Wright's aeroplane. Janin read all about the discoveries and experiments of the Wrights. He also read all about the discoveries and inventions of the Frenchmen and Germans. Then came the great success of the Wright brothers before Janin was ready to make his flight.

NEIGHBORS CALL TO SCOFF AT INVENTOR.

As Wright won success after success, the neighbors called to scoff at Janin, who was only able to glide out over the bay for a short distance and wait for a boat to tow him home. But Janin was proceeding with safety. While an aeroplane has to rise high enough to get above the trees and has to sweep over deep valleys and gulleys and always is running in danger of coming against a barb wire fence, Janin could skim over the water like a gull, and if his engine went dead, he could drop to the waves easily.

His plan was not unlike the Wright plan. The machine was equipped with wings like an aeroplane. An automobile engine was used to propel the machine through the air at a high rate of speed. Two pontoons were so placed under the machine that it would float on the water. The machine was so equipped that it could make headway while floating on the pontoons or it could leave the water and soar through the air.

"You will never make a go of it," one of the neighbors told the carpenter of the cabinet shop. "Man wasn't made to fly until his Heavenly Father calls him up yonder and gives him a pair of angel's wings, or kick him down yonder, and gives him a pair of bat's wings. Birds and insects can fly on this side of the grave, but no one else ever can."

"I'm busy tonight and can't talk to you," said Janin. The next Sunday he was cut getting sucked in the bay while he was trying to make his machine keep up in the air. Neighbors at first came in crowds to see the flyer's failures, but they got over it in time because there was nothing new to see. It was the same old story of failure while Wright, who had flown only over the land, was flying before the President.

Then came a day when Janin flew out over the water and came back to his landing. The machine was a success, but the neighbors would not admit it. In fact, few of them saw the successful flight. The machine had proven itself to be good in two ways. It had proven it could sustain itself on the water and had proven it could come back to land.

Then it was that makers of other flying craft began to make hydro-aeroplanes.

The neighbors sympathized as follows:

"Huh, I knew they'd steal your patent. Look what happened to the inventor of the cotton gin and all the rest of the big inventions. They never give you what you earn. You are too small to be an inventor."

Janin went to the makers of hydro-aeroplanes and insisted they had infringed on his patent rights. The manufacturers were polite but firm. They said they had invented the machines themselves. They had never heard of the obscure carpenter, and what if he did invent a machine which would fly over the water, they had invented machines to fly over both water and land and light anywhere. They told him it was indeed a strange coincidence they should have invented a machine like Janin, but it couldn't be helped. They wouldn't pay any royalties. They were not making any too much money themselves.

Janin hadn't time to argue out the matter with the manufacturers. He went back to Rosebank and kept at work earning $5 a day making cabinets. He hated to see his big chance slip away from him after eleven years of incessant work, but he guessed it couldn't be helped.

FOUGHT POVERTY FOR MANY YEARS.

Janin had fought poverty all his life and was used to it. He had fought poverty when he went to school with the girl who became his wife. He was fighting poverty when the first child, Antoinette, was born fourteen years ago, and kept on fighting it as the other children arrived. He was used to it and was a good fighter. The fight against poverty had first turned his thoughts to invention. He thought if he could invent a flying craft which could rest on the water he would have enough money to educate Antoinette and the rest of the brood. But when the other fellows went ahead and made machines Janin just kept on fighting poverty.

He first consulted with a lawyer and the lawyer offered to take the case if a retainer's fee was paid. Janin needed the fee money for groceries, so he went back to the cabinet shop. The neighbors advised him again to forget it. They explained there are no short cuts to wealth. A man has to work to get rich, they said.

"But I worked," said Janin.

The carpenter went before the Aeronautical Society of America and told his story. He showed the dates of his patents and contended he was the first inventor of the machine. He wanted the patent rights. He had worked for years on the invention, and after he had gotten it to flying other companies not only had made a similar machine, but had patented it and were making money out of it.

"I could beat these fellows in the courts if I had a chance," said Janin.

Curtiss was interviewed on the matter. He said he was within his rights in making his machine.

Four years ago Thomas A. Hill, a patent lawyer of Broadway, took the case into the patent courts for Janin. Hill was president of the Aeronautical Society of America, and that is how he came to be interested in the case. He did not accept any pay for his services.

Hill went to Washington and began a fight, which was won the other day after four years.

To understand the difficulties of the inventor one must know something about the patent office. Instead of a great big beneficient institution helping the poor, struggling inventors, it is only a bookkeeping and recording institution. So many new patents come into the office every day and so many applications for patents come into the office every day that the clerks there do little more than tabulate them, and it takes a long time to make the awards. Patent lawyers do a thriving business helping men get patents they deserve and helping other men keep their right to patents. The job Hill undertook was to get Janin's rights. Hill won the case and Janin has resigned his job.

When Janin left the shop the foreman wrung his hand and his fellow workmen crowded around him, their faces beaming.

"Congratulations, Al," said the foreman simply. From somewhere in the crowd spoke one of Janin's intimates:

"The 'Bug' has made good."

"Well," rejoined Janin good-naturedly, "it no longer will be Janin the cabinet maker, or Janin the Bug, the dreamer. I guess the handle to my name has been pretty firmly established as 'Jan, inventor of the hydro-aeroplane.'"

Then the modest little five-room flat at 78 Clifton avenue, overlooking the broad sweep of the lower bay, was the scene of an evening celebration, the like of which had never been seen at Rosebank. Most enthusiastic of the guests were men who, for the last ten years, have scoffed at the strange-looking winged craft in the Janin back yard, which the poor carpenter persisted, would some day be recognized by the Patent Office as the first flying boat.

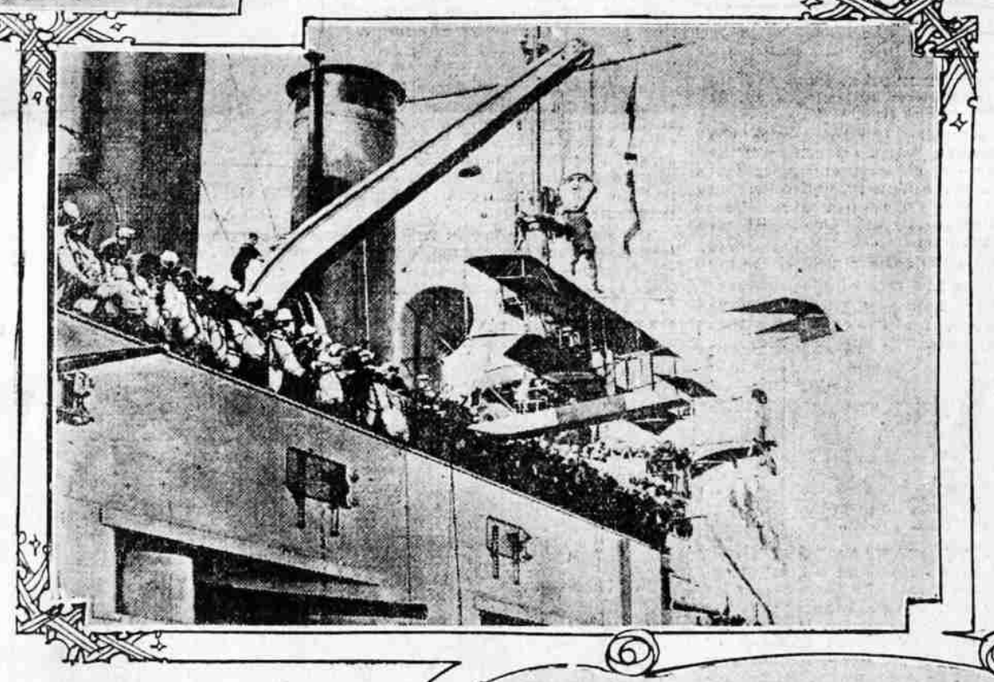
Just how it feels for a struggling workman, whose $5 a day is barely enough to provide the necessaries of life for a wife and seven children, to suddenly find himself famous, and a fortune within his grasp, Janin tried to explain. He is still a little dazed over his good luck, and in his hour of triumph thinks only of the good things in store for his wife and the now bright futures of the seven little Janins, blonde-haired youngsters ranging from 3 to 14 years of age.

"We put it over, didn't we, mother?" Janin beamed, affectionately patting his wife. "If it hadn't been that she stuck to me—believed in me, when all the rest were poking fun and scoffing—I never would have made it."

"And if it hadn't been," Mrs. Janin interrupted, 'that after your hard day's work for almost every night in the last ten or fifteen years you burned the oil at your work bench until long after midnight, you never would have made it."

"The best part of this invention is that, unlike a whole lot of others, it's going to bring us money—gobs of it," Janin broke in.

"What will I do with the money? The first thing will be to get a home of our own with plenty of ground around it for the kids to play. No more of these flats for us. But we are going to stay right here in Rosebank, where my wife and I were born and brought up. You know, we were sweethearts, even at old P. S. No. 13, around the corner. Most of the kids are now going to that same school. The oldest girl, Antoinette, who is now 14, can realize her ambition to go to normal school and take up teaching, if she wants to—but she don't have to now."



UPPER left—Albert S. Janin. Upper right—Glenn Curtiss, flying over the breakers in a hydro-aeroplane. Below—Hydro-aeroplanes in action.

A Favorite.

Little Girl—My father says he has often seen you act.

Pleased Actress—What did he say he saw me act in, dear?

Little Girl—In the seventies.

BOATS BUILT BY ENOCH S. COOPER OF YUKON TERRITORY NEVER RETURN TO THEIR ORIGINAL HOME

There are many professions and trades, but to build boats that never come back has been the business of Enoch S. Cooper of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, for over a dozen years.

The oldest tramp sails the seven seas to come home to die, the humblest stern-wheeler has one spot it calls home, but Cooper's boats leave his boatyard never to return.

It is true they are only little flat-bottomed affairs that are usually dignified by the name of punt or skiff, but to the men who buy them up in the Yukon each seems an argosy indeed.

Up in the North the more expeditious modes of travel come high. It costs a good many round dollars to go from Whitehorse to Skagway by rail and the steamer fare down the Yukon to Dawson is dear, to say the least.

To a man who would conserve his resources there are two means of getting out of Whitehorse open to him, the trail and the river.

The trail is long and hard, but the river flows swift and free and a light craft can float downstream through the Yukon's miles to Nome if one wants to go that far.

And so it is that Cooper is a builder of boats that never come back. For a full dozen years he has filled a want in Whitehorse because he is a skilled carpenter and a master builder of light, rough craft.

Your prospector, your miner, your business man, your fortune seeker launches his 15 foot skiff from Cooper's boatyard and lets the cold current carry him to Dawson. Four or five men pool their resources and get Cooper's largest boat, a 24-footer, put in their supplies and earthly belongings, and go down, down the Yukon to Nome.

But no matter the place they land once ashore they have no further use for the boat. The stream is too swift to return and perhaps they have no wish to, and so it is that Cooper's boats never come back. They can't.

The winter is cold in the Yukon and the river is full of ice, but when June comes with its perpetual daylight Cooper's hammer will sound again in his Whitehorse boatyard.

After a month in Portland as the guest of his son-in-law, Guy E. Eades, a local druggist, he is now sailing back to Skagway—for his last summer in the Yukon, he says, and then he is coming back to live on his farm near Dayton.

Broad of shoulder, big chested, with his hair almost untouched by time, although his full beard is beginning to whiten, Cooper, the boat builder, is 72 years old, and still building boats.

But aside from being the boat builder of the Yukon, Cooper is probably one of the very few men living who saw both the California and Klondike gold rushes, who panned gold in '49 and again in '98. It is true he was but a young boy during the golden days of '49, but he was there, and he cradled for the glittering gold with the best of them.

With his parents he came from the East in a prairie schooner to Oregon in 1846. News of the gold strike in California traveled fast, even in those days of slow communication, and the Coopers, father and son, journeyed south to the El Dorado, making the trip, in spite of the greatest hardships, by ox team.

After a year of moderate success, in which the boy saw all the wild life of the camps and learned the art of placer mining, the Coopers came back to Oregon in a sailing vessel, the journey requiring twelve days in face of a head wind.

They came up the Columbia and the Willamette to where Portland now stands. Both sides of the stream were heavily wooded and none would have ventured to predict the Rose City of today. The tiny vessel got as near shore as possible, some logs were dragged into the water and planks laid across them and the Coopers, bag and baggage and freight, disembarked.

"We transferred our possessions to a smaller vessel," said Mr. Cooper the other day, "and started upstream toward Milwaukie. My father didn't like the looks of the boat and told the master to put us ashore. It was fortunate he did, for the boat had not gone far before she upset.

"We took another boat and were carted around the falls at Oregon City and then in another craft up the river to our homestead near Wheatland. In after years I lived there and for some thirteen years in Salem and mined in eastern Oregon as well as following my trade of brick layer and plasterer.

"When the strike was announced in the Klondike I made for the North. From Skagway I started with a party for Whitehorse, going over the mountains. It was before the day of the railroad and we went by the Chilkoot Pass, the most difficult of the two in the mountains between the coast and Whitehorse.

"It took us days to make the trip, snow storms covering the trail and burying our caches of food and supplies. We carried our load over the pass on our backs, a fearful job."

And so Cooper is more than a builder of boats. He is one of the old school of pioneers and he points with pride to the fact that the only buildings with plastered walls—there are two—in Whitehorse, were plastered by him when he was not building boats.

He has made arrangements to sell his boatyard, but just to prove he is 72 years young he will plaster another building in Whitehorse this summer and build a boat a day to keep his hand in. Then he will retire, that is, he will if an active man can retire and the spell of the Yukon doesn't prove too strong.

But whatever he does, the world will remember him as the builder of boats that never come back.

Nails to Repair Legs.

The Randolph street rialto of Chicago was thronged with women in luxurious gowns and men in evening dress who were just leaving the gay cafes at the closing hour, when a heavy limousine swung around the Dearborn street corner and bowled over a pedestrian. The victim went down with a shriek and the wheels of the car passed over both of his legs.

Women screamed and clung to their escorts; there were hoarse shouts and 100 persons ran to the aid of the fallen man. Policeman Daniel Kehoe was the first to reach the machine. He picked up the victim in his arms, placed him in the car and ordered the driver to speed to the Iroquois Emergency Hospital.

The motorist, H. R. Jones, did as he was bid, and the victim was unloaded at the hospital in a jiffy. He was put upon an operating table without delay, his clothes were stripped from him, and his injuries were examined. He opened his eyes and grinned at the anxious surgeon. The surgeon grinned back.

Both the victim's legs were broken, but both were artificial. He was Gustave Miller, a brushmaker, living at Fulton and May streets. The doctor volunteered to get a hammer and nails to fix the members. He was uninjuried otherwise, and the legs were still substantial enough for navigation home.